

**Amendments to the Claims:** This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) An electronic message processing system arranged to receive electronic messages, the system comprising:

means for storing a plurality of classification rules;

at least one text analyzer;

a respective rule engine associated with the at least one text analyzer and with the rule storage means,

the at least one text analyzer and associated rule engine being co-operable to apply at least one classification rule to the content of a received electronic message and to generate at least one result based on the application of said at least one classification rule;

a classification module co-operable with the at least one text analyzer and associated rule engine and arranged to classify the electronic message into at least one message category based on said at least one result,

wherein the classification rules are arranged into a plurality of rule sets, said rule sets being associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure, the classification module being arranged to cause the at least one text analyzer in association with the associated rule engine to apply at least one of said rule sets to the message content in accordance with said hierarchical structure wherein the at least one result generated by application of a rule set from said plurality of rule sets to the message content determines at least one other rule set from said plurality of rule sets next to be applied to said message content.

2. (Previously Presented) An electronic message processing system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the at least one text analyzer and associated rule engine are arranged to generate a respective result set for the at least one rule set applied to the message content, the classification module being arranged to determine respectively from the at least one result of the at least one rule set whether to classify the message in a category or to cause a further rule set to be applied to the message content.

3. (Original) An electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the a text analyzer includes the rule engine.

4. (Original) An electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 3, wherein the classification module is arranged to instantiate a respective instance of the text analyzer for each rule set, each text analyzer instance being arranged to apply its respective rule set to the message content.

5. (Original) An electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 4, wherein each text analyzer instance is associated with a respective lexical analysis tool.

6. (Original) An electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 5, wherein the lexical analysis tool includes a dictionary.

7. (Original) An electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rule storage means comprises a plurality of rule files, each rule file containing a respective rule set.

8. Canceled

9. (Previously Presented) In an electronic message processing system arranged to receive electronic messages, the system comprising means for storing a plurality of classification rules; at least one text analyzer; a respective rule engine associated with the at least one text analyzer and with the rule storage means, the at least one text analyzer and associated rule engine being co-operable to apply at least one classification rule to the content of a received electronic message and to generate at least one result based on the application of said at least one classification rule; and a classification module co-operable with the at least one text analyzer and associated rule engine and arranged to classify the electronic message into at least one message category based on said at least one result, a method of classifying an electronic message comprising:

arranging the classification rules into a plurality of rule sets, said rule sets being associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure;

causing the at least one text analyzer, in association with the associated rule engine, to apply at least one of said rule sets to the message content in accordance with said hierarchical structure; and

determining at least one other rule set from said plurality of rule sets next to be applied to said message content depending on the at least one result generated by application of the preceding rule set from said plurality of rule sets to the message content.

10. (Original) A method of classifying an electronic message as claimed in claim 9, further including:

instantiating a respective instance of the text analyzer for each rule set; and  
arranging each text analyzer instance to apply its respective rule set to the message content.

11. (Original) An electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the electronic messages to be processed include unstructured text-based messages.

12. (Original) An electronic mail (e-mail) processing system comprising an electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 1.

13. (Original) An SMS message processing system comprising an electronic message processing system as claimed in claim 1.

14. (Previously Presented) An electronic message processing system arranged to receive electronic messages, the system comprising:

means for storing a plurality of classification rules;  
a classification module arranged to cause at least one classification rule to be applied to the content of a received electronic message to generate at least one result, wherein the classification rules are arranged into a plurality of rule sets, said rule sets being associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure, the classification module being arranged to cause at least one of said rule sets to be applied to the message content in accordance with said hierarchical structure wherein the at least one result generated by application of a rule set from said plurality of rule sets to the message content determines at least one other rule set from said plurality of rule sets next to be applied to the message content.

15. Canceled.

16. (Previously Presented) In an electronic message processing system arranged to receive electronic messages, the system comprising: means for storing a plurality of classification rules;

a classification module arranged to cause at least one classification rule to be applied to the content of a received electronic message to generate at least one result, wherein the classification rules are arranged into a plurality of rule sets, said rule sets being associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure, a method of classifying an electronic message comprising:

causing at least one of said rule sets to be applied to the message content in accordance with said hierarchical structure; and

determining at least one other rule set from said plurality of rule sets next to be applied to the message content depending on the at least one result generated by application of the preceding rule set of said plurality of rule sets to the message content.